

Eberle (J.))

A reply to Certain
Calumnious Statements xx

by
Francis S. Beattie





D. H. Henson

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REPLY TO CERTAIN

CALUMNIOUS STATEMENTS

UTTERED AND PUBLISHED

BY FRANCIS S. BEATTIE, M. D.



PHILADELPHIA:

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A REPLY.

Philadelphia, Nov. 14th, 1826.

Dr. Francis Beattie having in a pamphlet just issued by him, published certain letters of mine to Mr. Webster, and an extract of a letter from me to Dr. Ducachet, with the malicious intention of inflicting a wound on my character, I deem it proper to make the following statement of facts, in proof of my being guiltless of the calumnious charge which the said Dr. Beattie and his coadjutor Mr. Webster have thrown out against me.

Some time in July, 1821, Mr. Pattison and Dr. Revere, of Baltimore, who with Dr. Ducachet and myself, conducted the Medical Recorder, withdrew from the editorship of this work. Mr. Webster, who was then at Baltimore, wrote to me on this subject and requested my opinion concerning the future editorial arrangements of the journal. I replied to him, by a letter dated July 31, 1821, and among other things stated that "I would *rather* have the sole editorship of the work;" that I thought Dr. Ducachet "wanting in judgment;"* but that I did not know how to get rid of him." On the same day that I wrote thus to Mr. Webster, I received the following letter from Dr. Ducachet:

New York, July 28, 1821.

Dear Sir,

To my great surprise I have just learnt from Mr. Webster, that Mr. Pattison and Dr. Revere have withdrawn from the editorship of the Recorder. I have long suspected that Dr. R. was not altogether satisfied with the existing arrangements; and I was therefore not much

* I alluded here to the Dr's. Review of "Faithorn's Treatise on the Liver." He speaks of it as a work of much merit, when in truth it is a most contemptible performance.

astonished at his resignation. But I had no idea that Mr. Pattison would have joined him in the secession, as he spoke to me very encouragingly of the work, on his late visit to New York. Sorry as we are at the loss of their assistance, *I presume we both feel willing to carry on the work, and to continue co-editors. I can answer for myself, that I am.* I wish you would immediately write to me on the subject, and suggest some plan for conducting the Journal in future, *or say whether it shall be understood that we go on as usual.* I presume that unless very strong considerations of policy should dictate an opposite course, *there is no necessity for adding any more to the editorial co-partnership, &c. &c.*

Yours,

H. DUCACHET.

My opinion being thus solicited by the Dr. in relation to our future connexion as editors, and finding that Mr. Webster was disinclined to adopt the arrangement I proposed, I resolved to make no further objections to Dr. Ducachet, and to unite with him in the editorial management of the Journal. It was obviously my duty, therefore, to return him such an answer as might tend to preserve harmony and good feeling between us. My objections to Dr. D. at that time were not strong, nor were they in the least personal. His conduct towards me was always gentlemanly and friendly. I was satisfied that we should be able to sustain the credit and value of the Recorder. In answer, therefore, to the above letter from the Dr. I observed: "I regret that Revere and Pattison have withdrawn from the Recorder. I am not afraid, however, but that you and I will be fully able to carry on the work with quite as much ability as it has hitherto been done. There is no one with whom I would sooner conduct a journal than yourself; and I am perfectly satisfied that we and we alone should edit the Recorder."

I soon found, however, that his impetuous temper would, if not repressed, lead us into difficulties, injurious

to our reputations as editors, and to the interests of the work placed under our management. Did I conceal my opinion and apprehensions on this subject from Dr. Ducachet? The following extracts of letters from *him* will show that I did *not* practice such a want of candour towards him—they show, on the contrary, that I remonstrated repeatedly against his harsh censures and intemperate violence, and that, after the middle of August, 1821, there was an embarrassing want of harmony between us *as editors*.

In a paper which Dr. D. drew up in August, 1821, in relation to the New York Banker-street fever, he introduced various remarks on several very respectable individuals, which appeared to me so exceedingly harsh and offensive, that I felt it my duty to remonstrate strongly against the publication of his paper, unless the objectionable parts were stricken out. In testimony of this declaration, I offer the following extract of a letter from Dr. Ducachet to me, dated August 28, 1821, and which was in answer to one of mine objecting to certain passages in his paper on the score of their unreasonably violent and personal character, and urging him to leave them out.*

Extract of Dr. Ducachet's letter, dated Aug. 28, 1821.

“As for charging the committee,” (the committee of physicians appointed to investigate the character of the Banker-street fever,) “of *private malevolence*, I am conscientiously convinced of the truth of the charge, and it must therefore remain. As to the hint of Dr. P's. intemperance, the language I use is figurative, and I meant it so. At any rate it is the truth, and I do not wish to have it altered.”

Finding the Dr. thus fixed in his determination to charge a respectable committee of physicians with

* Not having kept copies of my letters to Dr. D. I am obliged to show by his own letters, what the nature of my communications to him were, in relation to this subject.

“private malevolence,” and to throw out a broad insinuation of *intemperance* against one of its members; and believing that such charges and insinuations would reflect discredit on ourselves and on our Journal, I again remonstrated against the admission of his paper, in the shape in which he offered it. I even informed him, that if he persisted in his determination to publish his paper, without omitting the objectionable passages, I would subjoin to it a note, with my signature, declaring my disapprobation of the personalities with which it was so strongly seasoned. In reply to this second remonstrance and declaration to protest publicly against his harsh and offensive remarks, I received a letter from him dated September 1, 1821, in which he says: “I still cannot conceive the impropriety of charging the committee with malevolent designs, nor can I see how it will injure *you* to let the paper remain as it is. I did it from principle and cannot change it. I must again beg you to leave out your note; it will certainly have a bad appearance, as it will show a disagreement between the editors.”

The paper was finally published without any material alterations; to which I subjoined the following protest.

“I think it right to state that I disavow any participation in the personal allusions contained in the foregoing article, furnished by my co-editor at New York.”*

“JOHN EBERLE.”

Dr. Beattie wishes to make it appear, that there was the most perfect harmony between Dr. D. and myself in relation to our editorial transactions, and that my letter to Mr. Webster in November, 1821, was therefore a treacherous attempt to repudiate Dr. D. at the same time that I professed to the Dr. himself my entire satisfaction with his editorial conduct. That this was not the case, is evident from the statements I have al-

* Vide, Medical Recorder, Vol. 5, page 745.

ready made; and that there was a disagreement between us, upon editorial points, is still further manifested by the following extract of his letter to me dated October 2, 1821: "I presume," says he, "that you perceive the necessity of keeping this disagreement between us perfectly secret."

From the circumstances which gave rise to this disagreement, I became perfectly convinced that Dr. D. and myself could not conduct the Recorder, in that harmonious manner which I thought essential to its success; and I therefore felt desirous to interrupt our editorial connexion. In conformity with these sentiments, I wrote to Mr. Webster, on the 11th, 15th, and 22d of November, 1821, and stated explicitly my views on this head, and my reasons for wishing to discontinue my editorial connexion with Dr. D. These are the letters published by Dr. Beattie.

The amount, then, of the affair is this:—Mr. Webster informs me of the secession of Drs. Revere and Pattison from the editorship of the Recorder, and asks my opinion with regard to its future management. I answer that I would *rather* have the sole editorship, if Dr. D. could be conveniently removed, and give some reasons for it. Dr. D. at the same time asks me by letter, whether I am willing to conduct the Journal with him. I find Mr. Webster unwilling to relinquish the Dr. I therefore waive my objections; resolve to go on with him; and to preserve harmony I return him a civil affirmative answer. Some time after this an editorial difference arises between us. I find that I cannot proceed with him harmoniously. I protest publicly against the personalities of his contributions; and finally appeal to Mr. Webster, with an explicit statement of my reasons for wishing to break off my connexion with Dr. D. as editor of the Recorder. This is the deep sin which the delicate moral sense of Dr. F. Beattie presents to him "as a melancholy picture of depraved human nature."

It gives me pain to be obliged to publish any thing out of my private correspondence with Dr. D. But as

he has suffered his name to be used, and furnished my enemies with extracts from my letters, and, as I believe, with a knowledge of the purposes to which they were to be applied, I may plead the necessity of refuting the slanders falsely founded on them, in extenuation of my bringing forward the name and the letters of Dr. Duchacet on this occasion.

• The original letters of Dr. D. are in the hands of S. Badger, Esq. where they can be seen and compared with the foregoing extracts by any gentlemen who may be curious on the subject.

J. EBERLE.

The exposition which Dr. Beattie has published of the circumstances connected with his dismissal from our Faculty, is marked throughout with misrepresentation, prevarication and unparalleled malignity. The trustees, the professors, and the students of our school, have much reason to rejoice in having got rid of him at any sacrifice. No principle of morality or of good policy can justify the retention of a man in a situation—and particularly in a situation so responsible as that of a public instructor,—who is either inefficient through supineness, or unfit from incapacity or ignorance to discharge adequately the duties of his post.

As to Mr. Webster, this “honest fellow,”!!! as Dr. D. calls him! although it may evince a want of due self-respect to notice him particularly, yet as he has falsely asserted, both in Beattie’s pamphlet and elsewhere, that *I was removed* from the editorship of the Recorder, I will merely observe that I have his *own* letters as well as copies of *mine* to show, that *I withdrew from the work in utter disgust of Mr. W.*

J. E.

